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Letter dated 27 January 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Further to our previous letters concerning the acts of piracy and provocation being committed by the United States naval forces in the Arabian Gulf, I have the honour to inform you that these occupation forces, with the participation of Australian forces, are continuing to take hostile action against vessels carrying civilian merchandise both in the Arabian Gulf and in Iraqi territorial waters. These naval forces intercept the vessels, assault and question their crews and, in some cases, detain ships and their crews for long periods of time. I present to you hereunder the most recent examples of the acts of piracy and aggression committed by the occupation forces in question:

(a) On 26 December 2002, at 12.15 p.m., two Australian patrol boats committed an act of armed aggression against the tugboat *Taj al-M'arek* (No. 24) belonging to the Iraq Ports Authority when it was located between Buoy No. 1 and Minaa al-Bakr. Individuals boarded the tugboat and searched it from top to bottom, after detaining its crews. They left half an hour later;

(b) On 15 January 2003, at 11 p.m., the United States naval forces committed an act of aggression against the vessel *Jabal Ali* (No. 3) belonging to the Nayef Maritime Services Company (United Arab Emirates) when it was leaving the port of Rashid. The vessel was intercepted and searched from top to bottom, and the captain was then required to turn back in order to discharge the vessel's cargo. The vessel therefore returned to the above port.

The presence of units of the United States and Australian naval forces in the Arabian Gulf and the continued interceptions of civilian ships in the Arabian Gulf and Iraqi territorial waters constitute a flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the international instruments relating to the safety of maritime navigation, and are thus assimilable to acts of aggression and State terrorism for which the United States must bear full legal responsibility. Iraq, for its part, reaffirms its right to seek compensation in accordance with the principle of international liability for the damage sustained by it and by its people as a result of the criminal acts being committed against vessels in the Arabian Gulf region by the above-mentioned occupation forces.

We request you to intervene in order to prevent the acts of aggression and terrorism committed by the United States in flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations and international humanitarian law and to call on the United States to withdraw its naval forces from the Arabian Gulf.

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I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Mohammed A. **Aldouri**
Permanent Representative